

# Bard

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# Bard

= = = = =

But how could even less of it  
split evenly like a wand of dry pine  
just because we this ink?  
So there must be magic  
deep inside the world a man  
sometimes gets to hear, then listen to,  
then hearken and obsess and spend  
all his nights imaging what he hears  
is more than he hears,  
more than him hearing it,  
an airplane overhead bearing  
businessmen to buy and trash  
the land below. The land  
he stands on. This holy land,  
the only dirt and stone that speak.  
Or he can hear. No one on earth  
more vulnerable than the magician,  
a child trapped inside an old man's will.  
This is about danger. It is a kind  
of confession, a kind of boast,  
a seduction reaching out for you.  
If it is really you over there,  
the sound so loud that I can't see.

12 August 2008

= = = = =

The everlastingness  
is like a pear  
we bite the thick  
end first the juice

runs everywhere  
our modest bosoms  
soaked with it  
the little stem end

though we hold for  
dear life forever  
nibbling what's left  
in beautiful lips,

this is the game  
God plays with us  
ripe sweet unending  
disappearingness.

13 August 2008

= = = = =

The workmen know  
a thing or two  
about things

what the pillowcase  
knows about my dreams

we live each other  
forever there is no other  
other, a hammer

after all these years  
a piece of wood.

13 August 2008

= = = = =

After climbing these stairs for forty years  
I looked down at the treads last night  
and thought: this is oak. The grain.  
The fortitude. My gratitude.

13 August 2008

= = = = =

*for T. M.*

“Take a book off the self”  
I read and tried to do.

I have to prepare myself  
for my next life,

the book in question, is it the one  
I should carry with me

to read on whatever passes  
in that country for a train?

Or a book to discard, sell, give  
to a friend so that no one, later,

inheriting, inhabiting  
my house will find it and think:

he read this book,  
it taught him to be gone?

13 August 2008

= = = = =

The things that happen in the night  
teach me names to say as I go to sleep  
again after fitful waking. Names  
I almost pray to. And a mower outside  
too early for the grass and then it's gone,  
the morning goes the way dreams go away,  
I'm out of bed and it's nine a.m. already  
and who am I? Whose names did I pronounce  
so confidently, like a trumpet solo in Handel,  
name, name, name and sleep again  
like silence anywhere, who is it that sleeps?

14 August 2008

= = = = =

The flowers thrown out yesterday  
but under a book on the table  
one petal from that pack of lilies  
lingers. I finger it: softness  
fading, dry, feels like paper now,  
as if everything suffers from  
the touch of word. And language  
is contagious, my poor flower.

14 August 2008



= = = = =

And what, you may ask, is a grown man  
doing writing about flowers? Haven't we  
torn up that contract long ago

that let us feel a thing we had not made,  
or turned the mere perception of something there  
into reverence and instrument and music?

14 August 2008

## **DOXOLOGY, 1**

maybe the sequences are off and the blue  
star got here before the dragon slept  
so it comes dreamless to our atmosphere  
a great blank gleam to cheer the mind  
with sheer absolute focus and nothing seen

just the point in light in which the point  
in us sees light the way hand washes hand  
until no stain is left anywhere even the sky  
is pure of inferences and the despots of  
opinion gnash their teeth at all our silences

14 August 2008

## **FERNS & YEW**

As if to choose  
eternity  
that grows  
from outside in

no core  
but what happens  
and be green  
all the time

and greener others  
unfurling death's  
singular flower  
lively among me.

15 August 2008

## THE ROOF BEAM RAISED

1.

Think of it. Lodgepole.  
They go out and build  
a house in the forest  
and no one lets them  
but the wood. The cut,  
trimmed, braced, held  
up from the earth, roofed  
over and moved in,  
with windows, with a door.  
The unthinkable difference,  
that a house can stand.

2.

Habitants snug, dreaming  
of their kind. Unsleeping  
in their midst  
the mitochondria, our own  
cows who milk the air for us.  
A little learning. A road  
with no intentions, Lord,  
a house in the woods.

3.

But am instead your Lady  
answered from the above  
leaf house and cloud portage  
and look down, I do,  
but also look up inside you,  
the very you.

No name you know,  
I am the secret pronoun

in your language, mask  
myself as I or you  
but I am really only  
who the forest thinks  
and the air recalls  
you hear me yet?

15 August 2008

## BONES

A.

Why do things hurt?  
And naught fits.  
Aces and bones, soft  
reconnaissance—  
just enough to go on.

B.

Why can't I hear you?  
You seem to be talking,  
I hear the word, I even  
guess their meaning  
but I don't hear you.

A.

Is that psychology you're talking  
or rhetoric? In me  
a tmesis and an enthymeme.  
the thing left out in the cut  
out middle is me—  
is that what you mean?

B.

Somebody is asking me a question  
but I don't know who.

A.

Isn't that a fault not mine,  
I hesitate to say yours, but yours?

B.

The questioning keeps going on – who  
are you who pesters me with these sounds?

A.

We could ask each other questions all night long...

B.

That gives me a clue at last.

A.

Thank you.

B.

But I think nothing of it,  
a clue means a thread,  
did you know that,  
sticks out of the tangle,  
leads you or you  
can tease out of the mass,  
a clue is one end of everything  
you have to untangle.

A.

You've lost me.

B.

That's what I was saying,  
stand still and let me find you  
by the little tip that leads to the middle.

A.

You said I had no middle  
or where my middle is  
a silence.

B.

I like silence well enough.  
We could be friends.

A.

Who are you for that matter?

B.

Don't you know even yet?  
I'm the girl on the cigar box  
your father smoked.

A.

No you're not,  
my father never smoked a girl,  
it was me who gazed at the box,  
the pale señorita offered me a leaf—  
this leaf I took  
became my life.  
You say you're she?

B.

I don't look anything like her but I'm me.

A.

I suppose that has to be good enough.

B.

They say you can't smoke in the dark,  
they say that blind men don't like cigarettes.

A.

Does that make us all blind?

B.

Or men?

A.

I'm the one doing the asking.

B.

That's what you've been saying  
all along but I still don't know who.

A.

Don't people have to stay with each other  
sometimes a long time to find out?

B.

Find out what?



A.  
Who the other is.

B.  
Or themselves.

A.  
At first they thought they could talk but they can't.

B.  
I hear  
your bones.

A.  
You do?

B.  
You, too?

A.  
No, I can't hear what is my own.  
What do I sound like in there?

B.  
Where?

A.  
Where the bones live.

B.  
I hear them running away from you  
fast as they can, like stars  
in some cosmology lesson, expanding cosmos,  
they hate your ignorance, your insolence.

A.  
Why?

B.

Because you're always asking questions.

What good is a question to a bone?

Don't you know that asking question is aggression?

A.

I know nothing.

B.

But I like what you said  
at the beginning.

A.

What was that?

B.

You called them things  
and that's their name,  
you said they hurt  
and so they do.

A.

Don't sing to me!

B.

Now we're getting somewhere—

A.

Where?

B.

Now you went and spoiled it.

15 August 2008

dl

‘strife’ or ‘struggle,’ or land of Lud  
could be Lydia, where  
the gold rolls down the water street and

and nothing more is known. *Complete success.*  
Wolves running from a forest fire. Vikings  
are skeptics when it comes to arrows. Blood,

though, everybody believes blood. Sift  
for it, it’s always running through your fingers,  
try to squeeze. Forgive my ancient knife.

The government sends you *a lot of money*  
and your *name is frequent* in the magazines  
so I want to play a game with you,

a game of cards where you are the cards.  
I think I know the card you turn up next  
but to my surprise it turns out to be me.

15 August 2008

XV.

À la fois rêve et reflet—miroir recouvert d'un récit fugace  
Constellation de gestes errants

Histoire à dire, à redire et à réciter.  
Une petite fille assise par terre tournée vers moi

Prononçant chaque lettre de mon prénom  
Dans cette langue tissée à l'image de son monde.

Chant hébraïque qu'elle ne cesse de parcourir  
En inscrivant le long du sol chaque lettre avec sa main—

Empreinte d'une mélodie avouée, murmure d'un pantomime.

XV.

At once dream and reflection— mirror misted with a quick fading tale  
Constellation of wandering gestures

A story to tell and keep telling, and to recite.  
A little girl sits on the ground turned towards me

Pronouncing each letter of my first name  
In this language woven in the image of her world.

Hebrew song she never stops rehearsing  
Inscribing in the dirt each letter with her hand—

Imprint of a melody confessed, murmur of mime.

16 August 2008